

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 COTONO 01279 230919Z

14

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-15 AID-20 PC-04 OMB-01 RSR-01 /138 W

----- 029702

R 230745Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5438

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

NPRUE AJ/AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN 1753

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 1279

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, DM

SUBJECT: MRGD MINISTERIAL CRISIS: LEFTIST MINISTER DISMISSED

REF: COTONOU 1220

1. CRISIS IN MRGD CAUSED BY DISPUTE OVER DIRECTION OF COTONOU
PORT MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION (ODAMAP) HAS NOW SUBSIDED. COUNCIL
OF MINISTERS, AFTER EXTRAORDINARY SESSIONS AUG 16 AND 17,
TOOK DECISION TO DISMISS BOTH MILITARY COMMISSIONER FOR
ODAMAP, MAJOR RODRIGUEZ, AND THE MINISTER FOR POST,
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT, CAPT. NESTOR BEHETON.
LATTER WAS PLACED UNDER ARREST ON KEREDOU'S ORDERS AFTER
REFUSING ATTEND CABINET MEETING AUG 16 AND INSULTING
PRESIDENT. DAHO-EXPRESS, AUG 21, CARRIED PRESIDENTIAL
CLARIFICATION OF OFFICIAL REASON FOR ARREST. IT ACCUSED
BEHETON OF ENCOURAGING ILLEGAL STRIKE BY PORT WORKERS TO
FORCE DISMISSAL OF RODRIGUEZ. SAID THIS WAS ACT OF

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 COTONO 01279 230919Z

INDISCIPLINE BY ARMY OFFICER ON ACTIVE DUTY IN MILITARY

REGIME. ACCORDING TO FRENCH AMBASSADOR VAN GREVENYNGHE, BEHETON WAS MANACLED AND TAKEN BY CAR TO KANDI IN NORTH AFTER REFUSING BOARD AIRCRAFT FOR TRIP.

2. ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT KEREKOU MAY HAVE SUFFERED SMALL LOSS OF PRESTIGE IN BEING FORCED DISMISS OLD ASSOCIATE RODRIGUEZ, THIS IS FAR OUT-WEIGHED BY LOSS OF CABINET POSITION BY PROGRESSIVES. FRENCH AMBASSADOR GLEEFULLY TOLD US MIN EDUNHQ CAPTAIN HILAIRE BADJOGOUME, TEARFULLY AGAIN TENDERED RESIGNATION WHEN HE HEARD OF BEHETON'S DISMISSAL. MIN INFORMATION, MAJOR PIERRE KOFFI, TOLD ME CONFIDENTIALLY AUGUST 21 THAT BADJOGOUME HAD BEEN ASKED BY COLLEAGUES TO REFLECT ON RESIGNATION REQUEST. HE NOW DOING SO. KOFFI COMMENTED THAT MRGD DOES NOT WANT MAOIST TYPE REVOLUTION AS WAS FAVORED BY BEHETON AND BADJOGOUME, THAT, IF BADJOGOUME REMAINED IN GOVERNMENT, HE MUST WORK FOR DAHOMEAN REVOLUTION, NOTHING MORE, AND THAT IF HE DECIDES HE CANNOT BE MEMBER OF TEAM, HE MUST GO. KOFFI CONFIDENTLY SAID HTAT BEHETON'S, AND POSSIBLY BADJOGOUME'S DEPARTURE FROM GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT COHESION OF MILITARY AND THATSUCH A MOVE WOULD IN FACT REMOVE PRESSURES FOR TAILORING GOVERNMENT'S REVOLUTION TO UNWANTED "FOREIGN IDEOLOGIES."

3. KEREKOU DISPLAYED CONSIDERABLE STRENGTH AND ASTUTENESS IN OUTMANEUVERING PROGRESSIVES AND EXPLOITING BEHETON'S GROSS TACTICAL ERROR IN INCITING LABOR UNIONS AND IN BREAKING CODE OF MILITARY CONDUCT. SIGNIFICANTLY, BOTH MIN INTERIOR AIKPE AND MIN FIN ASSOGBA AVOIDED ASSOCIATING THEMSELVES WITH PROGRESSIVES IN SUCH SHAKY CIRCUMSTANCES. BOTH STOOD WITH MODERATE MAJORITY FURTHER ISOLATING BEHETON AND BADJOGOUME.

4. A FURTHER ELEMENT IN DEMISE OF BEHETON IS STEADY PRESSURE ON MRGD TO REEMPLOY LT COL MAURICE KOUANDETE AND HIS ASSOCIATES WHO WERE RELEASED FROM PRISON LAST DECEMBER. FRENCH AMBASSADOR UNDERSTANDS KEREKOU FAVORS KOUANDETE'S RETURN TO ACTIVE ROLE AS HE SEES HIS NORTHERN COLLEAGUE AS A STRONG SUPPORTER. MOREOVER, KEREKOU REPORTEDLY DOES NOT VIEW KOUANDETE AS POTENTIAL THREAT TO HIS OWN POSITION.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 COTONO 01279 230919Z

5. REPLACING BEHETON AS MIN PTT IS CAPT CHARLES SEGBEZOUN BEBADA, WHO HAS BEEN PRESIDENT OF THE MILITARY REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL SINCE MARCH 30, 1973. A FORMER SERGEANT IN FRENCH ARMY, BEBADA IS FROM CENTRAL DAHOMEY NEAR SAVALOU. MOST RECENTLY HE COMMANDED ARMY NCO SCHOOL AT OUIDAH. ALTHOUGH HE HAS BEEN IN ARMY SINCE 1960, BEBADA HAS NOT PLAYED PROMINENT ROLE IN DAHOMEAN AFFAIRS UNTIL

BEING NAMED VICE-PRESIDENT OF CMR IN NOVEMBER 1972. AS FORMER ENLISTED MAN, HE NOT AMONG ARMY'S YOUNG ELITE WHO HAVE GRADUATED FROM PRESTIGIOUS FRENCH MILITARY SCHOOLS, ALTHOUGH DE DID GRADUATE IN 1966 AS SECOND LIEUTENANT FROM ECOLE D'OFFICIERS DE FREJUS IN FRANCE. HIS BACKGROUND AS COMPANY GRADE INFANTRY OFFICER NOT LIKELY PREPARE HIM FOR RESPONSIBILITIES HE WILL FACE AS MINISTER WITH PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBLE FOR VARIETY OF TECHNICAL SERVICES. HOWEVER, HE IS LIKELY ADD TO STRENGTH OF MODERATE MEMBERSHIP IN CABINET.

6 POLITICALLY, MRGD SEEMS TO HAVE HANDLED CRISIS WELL. IN SERIES OF PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS, PUBLIC HAS BEEN GIVEN FACTS OF CASE IN CONTRAST TO SECRETIVE PRACTICES OF PAST, WHICH STIMULATED INSTABILITY THROUGH ENDLESS SIDEWALK SPECULATION. THIS PUBLIC DISCLOSURE POLICY HAS UNDOUBTEDLY BEEN USEFUL IN ENLISTING POPULAR SUPPORT FOR AND UNDERSTANDING OF MRGD MAJORITY POSITION IN CRISIS. KEREKOU'S PERSONAL POSITION HAS CERTAINLY BEEN STRENGTHENED AND PROGRESSIVES IN CABINET SIGNIFICANTLY WEAKENED.
ANDERSON

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 AUG 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973COTONO01279
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1 ANDERSON
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: COTONOU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730821/aaaaaoxz.tel
Line Count: 136
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: COTONOU 1220
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08-Jan-2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <28-Jan-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MRGD MINISTERIAL CRISIS: LEFTIST MINISTER DISMISSED
TAGS: PINT, DM
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005